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THE

Commonweal

The Presidency Today

by C. K. Yearley, Jr.

FRANCE'S VERDICT ON DE GAULLE

Call to Greatness

by Thomas Molnar

Hour of Decision

by Robert Barrat

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Our Approach

"The Commonweal is in some ways pessimistic. It disbelieves in the possibility of a perfect political order, laws, governments, or human institutions. It views with alarm those prophets who promise a straight road to utopia. It believes that man's constant struggle is to hold his own, to keep his society from reverting to barbarism. It sees Original Sin as the first fact to be dealt with in human experience.

"The Commonweal is in other ways optimistic. It thinks that human society, though it can never be perfect, can, through constant effort, be made decent and kept civilized. It believes that history is non-determined, that man is not 'fated' to accomplish his own destruction, that through trial and error, through reason and learning, through suffering when needs be, man can find a *modus vivendi*. It looks to the Resurrection of the Dead on the final day of the human race.

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

GOING TO THE BRINK

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS in the Quemoy crisis leave the situation as dangerous and confused as ever. Nevertheless, there seems at least a good chance now that the Administration will win its gamble in the Far East and the Chinese Communists will not force the situation to a showdown. For this we must be thankful, because a showdown would offer us the alternatives of large-scale war or an ignominious political defeat.

But even if Secretary of State Dulles should prove to be lucky, along with the American people, whose destinies are to an enormous degree in Mr. Dulles' supremely confident hands, the United States responses to the Quemoy "emergency" have been and are profoundly disquieting. In the first place, obviously, Mr. Dulles need not necessarily be lucky in this affair. But even beyond that, the Administration's latest venture to the brink of war has been characterized by confusion, misrepresentation and irresponsibility.

For the sake of the record, let it be clear that the editors of The Commonweal have always urged a firm stand against Communist aggression—in Korea, for instance, and everywhere else in the world. Often, indeed, the editors have stressed the need for military strength to support foreign policy decisions when government leaders were reducing our military capabilities in accordance with economy waves or "peace offensives." Finally, this journal has not dismissed diplomatic risk-taking with any automatic rejection of "brinkmanship." It is sometimes necessary and desirable for a nation to declare that it will risk war to protect an interest vital to itself or its allies. But there would seem to be two conditions for "going to the brink." The objective must be worthwhile and the consequences of losing the gamble must be fully and deliberately accepted.

It is with these considerations in mind, then, that we say that our actions in the Far East have been and are not only frightfully dangerous but foolish and irresponsible as well. Quemoy and the other off-shore islands are not strategically vital to the United States or even to the Nationalist government on Taiwan, and these islands are strategically vital to the Chinese Communists on the mainland. The Peiping government must and will, sooner or later, win control of these coastal islands. Furthermore, the Chinese Communists can conquer these islands fairly easily, militarily speaking. They can be prevented only by full-scale United States intervention and a major war on the mainland, with United States victory very likely dependent on the use of nuclear weapons.

IT IS POSSIBLE, of course, that the Communist government of China does not really intend to fight for these islands. Perhaps the siege of Quemoy is a tactic designed to enhance the prestige of the Peiping government and to pressure the West into accepting the Communist government's demand for admission to the U.N. This is the conviction of Secretary Dulles, and if it is correct the United States ultimatum, that we will use force to protect Quemoy, will not be taken up. The United States will then have been successful in extending the intolerable Communist-Nationalist Chinese situation for a time longer; the denial of the facts of life in that area of the world will be carried on another little while—until the inevitable next crisis, involving another island, perhaps.

If the world is very lucky, the resumption of negotiations proposed by Chou En-lai may lead to peaceful adjustment of the Communists' claim to the off-shore islands and perhaps even to a solution of the entire Taiwan-"two Chinas" problem. But

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there is not much reason to hope that the Chinese Communists will prove any less inflexible than they have in the past. Moreover, the present Administration is entangled in an inflexibility of its own, brought about by its promises and pledges of "being hard on Communists" and "unleashing Chiang Kai-shek."

At any rate, it is also undeniably possible that our ultimatum will be taken up, that we will find ourselves confronted by a major war, involving atomic weapons and a tremendous sacrifice of American ships, planes and lives. And this in the face of overwhelming condemnation by the nations of the world.

It seems incredible that Mr. Dulles and President Eisenhower are prepared to commit the nation to such a war for the sake of the island of Quemoy. But the alternative to war will then be retreat and a political humiliation, with a corresponding political triumph for the Chinese Communists. Should the U.S. ultimatum be taken up, this is a more likely outcome than war.

There is also the chance of an accident, or an error in judgment by the Communists or the Nationalist Chinese—or one of the United States field commanders who may or may not have the authority to use nuclear weapons at their own discretion. (The President said recently that he didn't know for sure if they did or not.) A stumble into all-out war becomes every day an increasingly real possibility.

The present risk of war with the Chinese Communists is a monstrous and unjustified policy, not because it is a risk but because it is a risk which is needless and useless. For with all its catastrophic danger, the stand we have taken simply evades and postpones once more the basic problem of China.

PASSENGERS' PLIGHT

IT IS NOT EASY to set up and evaluate the respective priorities when suburban rail lines are threatened with discontinuance because they do not pay. The passengers themselves, the railroad employees who would be affected, the stockholders, local businesses and communities and the general tax-paying public all have a stake. High up on such a list, close to the top, would be commuters depending in varying degrees upon trains and connecting ferries to get to their jobs. Breadwinners who bought homes and mortgaged their futures some years back on the not unreasonable assumption that good access to their jobs in a nearby city would continue indefinitely would seem to have a particularly compelling case. If the plan is to meet this need through the multiplication of bus services—as would now be the case for a number of Bergen County, New Jersey, and Rockland County, New York, communities—the resulting traffic congestion on already crowded highways will have to be given its due weight.

Losses from commuter service operations comprise an acute sector of American railroads' stresses and strains over passenger service generally. Because costly facilities are in use only during the rush hours, and taxes on right-of-way and terminal facilities tend to be particularly high in and around metropolitan centers, the dwindling revenue from passenger fares becomes even more difficult for railroad management. Cutting the number of trains and ferries, while raising rates, often falls far short of easing big deficits. In instance after instance the American business principle of cutting out unprofitable operations leads to an application to the Interstate Commerce Commission to discontinue this costly service.

The mounting losses which the Pennsylvania and the New York Central, the nation's two largest railroads, have reported for the total of their passenger operations in recent years supply another highlight on the problem. Here again services have been greatly curtailed and fares raised to the point of competitive disadvantage. The result is to increase the deficit. Profits from the handling of freight are unequal to their proverbial role of making ends meet. And whereas in bad years many American enterprises cut out dividend payments on their common stock, the railroads have substantial fixed-interest charges on their bonds to meet.

American railroads have, in fact, a very special status. The vast tracts of land that the government deeded to them on both sides of their right-of-way indicated this from the beginning. Their regulation by the Interstate Commerce Commission is only one of the marks of their public character. Another is the need to keep our principal rail facilities in good working condition to meet any possible emergencies involving national defense. American railroads perform a basic task.

In consequence, when one railroad after another secures permission to cut off spur and suburban lines on the business principle of discontinuing all financially unprofitable operations, regardless, the spectacle has its disquieting aspects. Obviously there are limits here. Government can hardly be expected to subsidize certain costly means of trans-

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portation because a few die-hard individuals find it more profitable, convenient and generally preferable to their taste. That is one extreme. On the other hand there would seem to be cases where families, communities and regions would be better off on the whole if financially unprofitable rail lines were subsidized or put under public operation, and thus maintained as a service. Public carriers such as the railroads, while organized for profit, do not function as purely business operations to be maintained or discontinued according to the dictates of a balance sheet.

SHUNNING THE SUN

AUSTERITY-MINDED, Miami Beach-hating Walter Reuther has finally won his point. In the future, the leaders of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. will have their annual meeting in Washington instead of making a winter pilgrimage to the sun and sand of Miami Beach, as has long been their practice. We suppose this change will not endear Mr. Reuther to many of his fellow labor leaders, who welcome a junket South on an expense account just as much as do conventioneering business men. But on this issue we side with the U.A.W.'s president, although not from Puritan motives.

Most labor leaders work hard, and when a good chance comes along they are as entitled to sun themselves as anyone else. Despite such rational arguments, though, conventioneering in Miami Beach by labor leaders is incredibly bad public relations. It may not in fact cost any more than meeting anywhere else, but this argument is unlikely to be very persuasive to the Detroit auto-worker who is laid off or working abbreviated hours. We are happy that labor leaders have apparently seen the point at last.

DENYING NEGROES THE VOTE

THE UNITED STATES Justice Department has made the charge that election registrars in Terrell County, Georgia, have engaged in "arbitrary refusal to register Negroes who demonstrate themselves to be fully qualified." This is the first such case to be prosecuted under the 1957 Civil Rights Act, and it is hard to see how the Justice Department could have found a more clear-cut case.

According to the government's charges, only forty-eight out of more than five thousand Negroes of voting age are registered in Terrell County, in contrast to the fact that 2,679 out of 3,233 white citizens are registered. Conceivably this situation could indicate an almost complete lack of interest in voting by the Negro population, but this is not so, says the Justice Department. Last April, according to the charges, five Negroes tried to register to vote in this county. Four were school teachers with college degrees; they were turned down for "alleged inability to read correctly and intelligibly." The other applicant had attended Tuskegee Institute; he was denied the right to register on the grounds of "alleged inability to write correctly and legibly."

What the Justice Department is seeking is simply an injunction against interference by State officials in the right of these Negroes to vote in Federal elections. This demand cannot be dismissed, certainly, as excessive. Even those who say we must go slowly in integrating the schools can hardly support denying to any qualified citizen his right to vote.

ICELAND'S FISHING GROUNDS

BRITAIN'S DISPUTE with Iceland over fishing rights has a number of unhappy aspects. With fleets of British trawlers venturing into the forbidden waters under armed escort and anti-British demonstrations in Reykjavik kept in check only with the greatest difficulty, there is a serious rift between two of our NATO allies. They have been at odds for some months—ever since British unwillingness led to the Soviet Union's stepping in as the principal market for Iceland's fish exports. It is said that herring and cod supply nine-tenths of Iceland's national income and that this dispute comes at a time when the nation's finances are in a desperately precarious state.

Since sales of fish constitute Iceland's only means of paying for its many imports, the deadly efficiency of foreign radar-equipped trawlers has aroused great fears as to the island's vital source of supply. Iceland's unilateral declaration of a new twelve-mile limit, this summer, not only is a major move in its dispute with Britain but also a desperate effort to conserve the primary source of its national wealth.

Britain by its recent show of force against a relatively defenseless small nation has been behaving badly, regardless of whatever difficulties its own important fishing industry may be in. Its aggressive attitude can only serve to strengthen Iceland's shift

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toward affinity with its mighty Soviet neighbor, as registered in the most recent election there. This island, with its key NATO base and observation post, is essential to the defenses of the West. And solution of such a dispute by sheer force will result in incalculable harm.

The traditional three-mile limit does seem to be up for re-examination. American efforts at Geneva to persuade the other nations attending a U.N. conference on the Law of the Sea to extend the limit to a compromise distance of six miles were defeated. In the present dispute the Icelanders have insisted on their full twelve miles to protect the spawning grounds in their coastal waters; the Soviet Union was quick to recognize the newly declared limit, which was to be in effect September 1. Too much is at stake here to permit a protracted dispute. If some compromise mile-figure cannot be agreed upon, perhaps an acceptable distinction could be drawn between territorial waters and permitted fishing grounds, as the London *Economist* suggests. These limits cannot simply be decreed by each individual nation; coastal waters have to be delimited by international agreements in the interests of concord between nations, due national sovereignties and freedom of the seas.

THE MINERS AND THE A.M.A.

OFFICERS of the United Mine Workers' Welfare and Retirement Fund have been engaged in a running battle with the American Medical Association for a good many months, and there are no signs of a truce on either side. The U.M.W. fund derives from royalties on every ton of coal and involves big money. As of now, for example, the balance on hand amounts to almost one hundred and fifty million dollars, and this sum covers only one year's budget. Sixty-five thousand over-age miners draw pensions of $100 a month, and plans for hospital and medical care cover about one million miners and their families. All in all, despite the relatively small publicity given to it, the U.M.W. fund is the largest non-government welfare fund in the world.

The Mine Workers' dispute with the A.M.A. involves the medical program financed by the U.M.W. welfare fund. For a long time the fund's executive medical officer, Dr. Warren F. Draper, tried to get the A.M.A. to do something about the U.M.W. complaints. In brief, Dr. Draper and other officials of the fund were concerned with what they considered unnecessary surgery and unduly long hospitalization involving U.M.W. patients; the Mine Workers charge that local medical societies did nothing effective about physicians who engaged in unethical practices at the expense of the miners and the U.M.W. fund, despite repeated complaints. Unpublicized conferences with officials of the American Medical Association got nowhere, so the U.M.W. finally insisted that its patients would go only to doctors and hospitals approved by the Fund. This decision then led to open conflict with the A.M.A., which has always insisted that all patients should have a completely free choice of doctors, with no restrictions whatsoever.

There the matter stands. The U.M.W. executive medical officer is still a member of the A.M.A., although he was not reappointed to the Association's Committee on Medical Care for Industrial Workers. And recently the U.M.W. released figures on the results of its new policy, results which must please officials of the U.M.W. fund mightily, whatever the A.M.A. thinks of them. Over the nine-month period since the new policy went into effect, medical and surgical costs are down about two and one-half per cent, for a saving of almost one and one-half million dollars. And this saving was made in a period of rising costs for medical and hospital care. This fact does not mean that the U.M.W. has won its argument with the A.M.A., of course, but even a fund that paid out sixty million dollars for medical expenses last year must find the saving of a million and a half in nine months a substantial consolation.

GOING THATAWAY

ONE OF THE major exposés of our time, judging from the amount of newsprint given to it, is the revelation that at least one and maybe more of television's most popular quiz shows were "fixed." Show business commentators assure us that millions of American housewives who took quiz programs to their hearts have been desolated by this news. And, since it is feared that public heartbreak will soon give way to outrage, T.V. programmers are hurrying the quiz show format towards a merciful oblivion.

At any rate, that the T.V. quiz may soon be yesterday's darling is hardly bad news to us. In fact, if they would have the same effect we might welcome a few exposés in another T.V. genre—that some of television's western heroes are afraid of guns or hate horses, for instance, or maybe even that they really like girls.

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The Presidency Today

The President, we seem to agree, ought to behave as though he is the most dynamic force in government, standing athwart all three branches

by C. K. YEARLEY, JR.

ONE MIGHT CONCLUDE from the American past that our fear of any government willing to make vigorous use of its powers amounted to a fixation. However, the point has been overstressed. At the present time, certainly, it seems clear that quite the contrary is true. We are more prone to suspect, if not to fear, any government which neglects broad, even massive, exercise of its powers.

This shift in attitude toward government has roughly paralleled our movement from an agricultural to an industrial community and has naturally attended the relative decline of sectional interests before rising forces of nationalism. It also mirrors the impact of total wars and extravagant swings of the business cycle, as well as the increasing democratization, diversification, and interdependence of our society. These changes, as we might hope they would in any viable political situation, have reshaped popular concepts of our national leadership. They have moved the locus of leadership to the White House, placed this onus on the shoulders of the President, whether he accepts it or not, and cast the Chief Executive in roles which were totally unknown to earlier Presidents.

None of this happened overnight. Looking back, we can easily see that the Presidency has been an office in continuous evolution. Its overall development has been toward the mastery of vastly greater authority, won largely through the extension of original powers, the "discovery" of new ones, and aggressions at the expense of coordinate branches of government. There have been, to be sure, periods of retrogression. The muscular strength the Presidency achieved through the political athleticism of a Jackson, Lincoln, or Wilson certainly atrophied somewhat in subsequent years. But the tendency for power to coalesce around the Executive has been unmistakable. Harding's power was no less great than Wilson's, and even a Coolidge had more power than his predecessors in the nineteenth century, though admittedly the roles Harding and Coolidge chose for themselves were not in consonance with the capacities of their office.

The elements that contributed to the expansion of Executive authority, of course, have been legion. To begin, although the Presidency was born of a compromise, the "compromise," before the Republic was half a century old, proved a practical victory for those who wanted a strong head of state. Significantly, for instance, the Executive was allowed an existence independent of other branches of government. Furthermore, as it happened, since custom decreed the debility of the Electoral College, he was directly elected by those coalitions-of-the-moment known as "The People." The President, in brief, was the sole officer of government that could readily identify himself with and allow himself to become the symbol of two vital urges in American life—democracy and nationalism. And this fact was enormously important to the future of the institution.

THE PRESIDENCY, it should also be remembered, has often encouraged the creativity of its incumbents. Our frame of government, after all, was fashioned in an agrarian society whose ordinary citizens would have found more that was congenial to them in the Age of Elizabeth I than in the Age of Franklin Roosevelt. Moreover, while the Constitution was deeply concerned with certain liberties, it raised what was basically an anti-democratic state in the midst of a people who were embracing democracy more rapidly than any in the world. Thus Presidents, especially as they drew strength from mass-based political parties, were under the pressure and the temptation to adjust what they considered

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the fundamentals of the Constitution to the broad social requirements of their day.

Furthermore, as E. S. Corwin reminds us, the interplay of crisis and personality has been intimately related to the formation of the modern Presidency. There are doubts that Lincoln would have risen to greatness without being wracked by the problems of secession or plunged into the maelstrom of Civil War; nevertheless, it is hard to imagine a Buchanan gaining immortality under the same circumstances. Similarly, President Taft was immersed in the same tides of Progressivism as Woodrow Wilson, and Herbert Hoover wrestled with the same economic catastrophe as did Franklin Roosevelt, yet Wilson and F.D.R. did infinitely more to transform the Presidential institution than either Taft or Hoover. The twentieth century, of course, has added a new dimension to the interplay of crisis and personality. Until just over a generation ago, crisis was abnormal, at least insofar as it affected national life. We casually selected, smugly enjoyed, and easily survived our negative and less forceful Executives. Only ninety years ago General Grant was an enormously popular man, and Coolidge and Hoover still more recently. In our day, however, crisis is a turning-point toward still another crisis, and national anxieties are so prolonged as to be the normal state of affairs. It is no longer clear that we can surmount the crisis-of-the-moment, let alone survive a weak Executive. As a consequence of this situation, the concept of the Presidency generally entertained is the one derived from our strongest executives—Lincoln, Wilson, F.D.R., *et al.*

At the time of Mr. Eisenhower's entering the White House, American political behavior, reflecting the legacies of aggressive Presidents, still indicated rising levels of expectation in regard to the Chief Executive's role in government. Fundamentally, the President was expected to realize that his office is the only real bridge between all of the people and the central government and that he alone among our political figures is able to give leadership to the whole of the nation.

To suggest that Congress will refuse to offer such leadership is untrue; usually it will try. To assert that it cannot lead is inaccurate; periodically it has done so. But it is precise to say that Congress always has been and still is inherently unable to *sustain* the burdens of national leadership. Congressional responsibilities are local, parochial, sectional, not national. The atmosphere of the legislature is more that of the marketplace than that of the engine room. And there is such a Babel of interests, such a blurring of personalities, that for purpose of action power is too diffused. The public instinctively realizes that the alternative to presidential leadership is drift. Thus the measure of the modern President is his record as the creator of public policy, essentially an educative task, and as the force initiating and then struggling to win passage for the nation's important foreign and domestic legislation. The implications of this Presidential role are profound.

The President must stand, first, as the guarantor of socio-economic legislation essential to the nation's economic health. He must likewise inject Federal legislation of this nature into the hiatus left by the states. Moreover, in lieu of the classic concept of the separation of powers—three discrete branches of government blocked off from one another by constitutional barbed wire—he is expected to recognize that the branches of government functionally overlap. The Supreme Court, for example, legislates as well as judges; the Congress judges as well as legislates, and the modern Executive is expected not only to administer the law but also to exercise powers that are by nature judicial and legislative. Although public, constitutional, and personal inhibitions upon him are very great, the President, we seem to agree, ought to behave as though he is the most dynamic force in government, standing athwart all three branches of State. It is assumed, finally, that to attain his ends he will so master his own party as to make it the blunt instrument with which he hammers out his programs.

GIVEN THESE EXPECTATIONS concerning the Presidential role, what can tentatively be said of the present Administration as a whole and, within this context, of Mr. Eisenhower's impact upon his office? Any attempt to answer this question will bring anguished charges of partisanship, but the attempt must be made nonetheless. First, of course, the anomaly of allowing *any* man to serve his political apprenticeship *in* the White House during an age of crisis is in itself highly significant. It bespeaks an unwholesome contempt for the high art of politics, and it betrays the naive assumption that men of action, untainted by political knowledge, possess charismatic qualities that insure performance.

In this as in many other respects, however, it should be noted that the Eisenhower Administration is a remarkably representative regime. One suspects that liberal criticism of the President, which has displayed a tendency to invade the hospital and wander off to the golf links, would be franker if it conceded that many distasteful things about the Administration reflect very typical strains in American life: puritan self-righteousness, anti-intellectualism, imprecision of mind, and the host of beliefs to the effect that men live by prosperity alone, that honest men are above politics, that organization is a substitute for creativity, that the alternative to complacency is crusade, that government is an experience in accounting and statistics, that decency relieves men of decision.

Beyond this, thanks in some measure to luck, the Russians, and the Democrats, the Administration is in no meaningful way comparable to the Administrations

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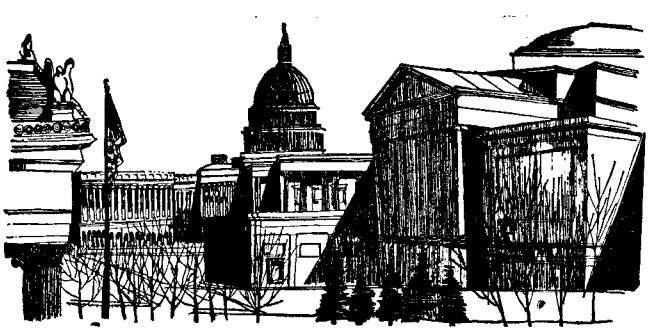
of Hayes, Arthur, Garfield, or McKinley. It stands as far above the regime of Grant and Coolidge as it does below those of Wilson or F.D.R. Just as the latter raised the standards of political excellence, so the Eisenhower Administration, to its credit, represents a new standard of mediocrity.

Aside from a collection of clichés, Mr. Eisenhower himself apparently had no serious views on the nature of the Presidency until he sought office. As a soldier-hero, he regarded professional politics, even voting, as beyond his purview. Only a few years prior to his candidacy, relatively speaking, his ambitions centered on acquiring command of an armored division. "I am a soldier," he once remarked, "and no one thinks of me as a politician." Few people do yet; that is probably one of the main keys to his popularity as well as to his effects upon his office.

It would appear that one of the effects of Mr. Eisenhower's tenure is a tendency toward the depersonalization of power. This seems the case despite the potential given to Mr. Eisenhower by his unprecedented electoral victory, and despite the continuing humbuggery spawned about the Eisenhower personality—which after all probably has its counterpart among men his age in every upper-middleclass neighborhood in America. Mr. Eisenhower, because of his conservatism, his soldierly reticence and, perhaps, his tiredness, tends to withdraw inside the institution of the Presidency and allow it to overshadow him as a leader. He has shown a marked reluctance to accept the rather aggressive role other modern Presidents have displayed towards Congress and, as leaders of national government, towards the states. In a sense President Eisenhower waits for initiative launched somewhere else to overtake him.

In a Jackson, either of the Roosevelts or Harry S. Truman, these attitudes and this behavior are hard to imagine. Nevertheless, the results of Mr. Eisenhower's somewhat different approach to his office are not clear as yet. Long before Mr. Eisenhower's election, several students of government argued that the Presidential institution should transcend the personality of its incumbents. In their view, the dynamism of the strong Presidents, their discovery of residual powers, their flamboyance and showmanship, their alleged inhibiting of local responsibility—all these things unfortunately



tended to raise such Presidents above the law. In the long run, they believed, a democratic society would profit by denying itself the drama produced by a few Presidential earthshakers in favor of a stabler institutionalization and a better distribution of power.

These counsels may be the wise ones; the days of the individualistic tycoon and political boss are gone, and it is certainly arguable that the big, impersonal society that finished them has produced a big, impersonal government which in turn is depersonalizing the Presidency. Given our traditions, however, it would seem likely that we voted for the hero-soldier precisely because we thought he would be the colorful and efficient leader we felt the professional politicos were not. Certainly, in voting for Mr. Eisenhower many Americans expected élan, dash, and spirit, if not brilliance, both to meet the needs of the times and to offset the growing impersonality of our jobs and lives.

Instead we have witnessed the continuing divorce of the Eisenhower personality from the role of leadership —the essence of the depersonalization of power—and the cultivation of his personality as an end in itself.

THE tendency to separate personality from the responsibilities of active leadership naturally increases the reliance the President places on organizational and staff work. We are entitled to wonder if the political party it has taken over a century to develop could not bear a measure of this burden, as political parties have to a large extent for previous Presidents, but there is no denying that, given the inexperience of Mr. Eisenhower, much of the organizing around him is sensible.

First, the President's own skills—and they are appreciable—and his experience lie in this direction. Second, as his press conferences tend to demonstrate, he is uninformed on numerous matters of public policy, and unlike Andrew Jackson or F.D.R. whose ignorance was often equally as embarrassing, he does not make up the deficiency through political talent, articulateness or showmanship. Hence the understandable reliance on organizations of his own making. Finally, there are innumerable petty functions hamstringing the President which everyone admits he and his predecessors should have been freed of long ago. If the Eisenhower staff can increase the speed, intelligence and efficiency with which the President works it will have rendered a service. To date, however, it is not clear that this is indeed the case. Moreover, it is hard to tell whether Mr. Eisenhower manipulates the staff or the staff manipulates Mr. Eisenhower.

The problem of the Presidential role in the decision-making process is, of course, affected by President Eisenhower's reliance on this staff, his insistence that complex issues be sweated down to the briefest of memos and that all debates be resolved before his staff

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confronts him. But this problem involves questions that antedate 1953. Generally speaking, decision-making in a democratic society has always been for those engaged in it a tortuous and difficult business. In addition, from the days of Jackson's "Kitchen Cabinet" to those of F.D.R's Hopkins and Mr. Truman's Harry Vaughan, good democrats have required reassurance that decisions emanating from the White House are the President's. The truth would seem to be that the modern decision-making process has been growing increasingly hazy, and students of government need to understand much more about it than they do. In the case of Pentagon Reorganization Mr. Eisenhower apparently kept the initiative and has been informed, intelligent and decisive; in such instances as Dixon-Yates, however, this was not true. There are ample grounds for suspecting that as Chief of State, as Commander-in-Chief, and as Head of Government Mr. Eisenhower generally allows decisions to trickle up and merely certifies actions that have been decided in effect elsewhere among his advisors.

It is entirely possible, of course, that this is a misreading of the President's own statements and actions, but it is not incorrect to state that he fails to convey the *impression* that as a rule he personally weighs advice and makes his own decisions. In this regard the President falls short of the level of political expectations built up by our strongest Presidents, and he falls well short of the potential with which he was armed when he came to office. His regime is competent and representative in many ways, but competence and representativeness are not substitutes for active, creative Presidential leadership. These former characteristics are more apt to produce government by spasm than government by planning and vision. It is doubtful, moreover, that the organizational situation Mr. Eisenhower has created in Washington will survive the return of a professional politician to the Executive Mansion.

In the meantime, while Mr. Eisenhower would certainly reject the notion, it would appear that he tacitly accepts the principles of collective leadership. Unhappily, we are not yet equipped for collective elections to the White House, and it would be comforting to many of us to know in the interim that Mr. Eisenhower not only reigns but rules.

France's Verdict on de Gaulle I

Call to Greatness

by THOMAS MOLNAR

A FEW WEEKS ago a British television reporter undertook to demonstrate, by interviewing the men-in-the-street in Paris, that the general sentiment of the population was unfavorable to de Gaulle. On-the-spot reporting is, of course, notoriously the worst method of getting at a Frenchman's real views: first, because he mistrusts the interviewer; second, because he mistrusts *anybody* in power, sometimes for no other reason than to be able to say afterwards, "I knew it all along."

The truth of French feelings about de Gaulle at this time, a few weeks before the referendum, appears to me different from and much more complex than the British reporter's conclusion.

De Gaulle's dramatic comeback has greatly impressed a large majority of his compatriots. Three factors militated in his favor from the beginning: the political impotence of an all-powerful National Assembly; the nation's indifference before the agony and collapse of the Fourth Republic; and the general's personal authority and supreme self-confidence. The first two points need no special demonstration; and everybody may ascertain the third who has listened to comments either by de Gaulle's close collaborators, or by ordinary men and women at the occasions of his personal appearances.

Yet it is fashionable today, in Leftist and sometimes also in politically moderate circles, to express fears that the present situation will lead to a dictatorship. I say it is *fashionable* to claim such fears, because in reality I think nobody believes it except a few theoretical Marxists who interpret any movement contrary to the "direction of history" as reaction and fascism. The nature of politico-intellectual life in France is such, however, that much of what appears in print is closely or remotely inspired by *le mythe de la gauche,* combined, in some cases, with a certain republican instinct allergic to men like de Gaulle.

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Those who oppose the General with more or less virulence, who profess to see in him a danger to the Republic and to republican legality, concentrate their attacks on two points. The less dramatic but more immediate danger, according to them, is the new Constitution, if accepted by the nation. Even pro-Gaullist (by resignation rather than by enthusiasm) Raymond Aron must take pains to persuade himself that the authoritarian features of the constitutional project are justified by the hard fact that in France "no coherent majority, no common decision ever emerges out of the universal suffrage." He adds, however, that the Constitution, molded around the strong personality of de Gaulle, would be a dangerous instrument in the hands of a man less well-intentioned.

THE SECOND DANGER that the anti-Gaullists fear, more remote but more threatening, is the Army. On this point professional politicians, leftist editors, and Sorbonne law professors find themselves in agreement. Claude Bourdet, ex-deputy and editor of *France-Observateur,* told me that in May a parachutist invasion of France seemed to be imminent, and that Pflimlin (and the Assembly) yielded to the General from fear of the colonels. Both Bourdet and Duverger (professor of law and prestigious political theorist) insist that de Gaulle himself is, to a large extent, prisoner of the "Algerian rebels" who have established a sort of semi-independent province in North Africa with at least propaganda weapons directed at the mother-country. Jean-Marie Domenach, editor of the leftist-Catholic *Esprit,* speaks of the continuing "reign of terror" in Algeria and of the systematic use of torture, in spite of Malraux' assurances to the contrary, given at his memorable press-conference on June 24.

Let us look now at the other side of the medal. For the first time in many years the "nationalist" elements are reasserting themselves, and want to profit by the temporary setback of the republican-democratic regime. The nationalists, ranging from young and dynamic disciples of Maurras (like the group around Pierre Boutang) to people in whom the dissatisfaction with the *system* has awakened a never-quite-buried chauvinism, firmly believe that France can and should reverse the "course of history" by reestablishing an orderly State, by reasserting her presence in Africa (in the face of Communist infiltration and the Anglo-Saxon policy of retreat), and by paving the way for the return of the king. (This would be made easier by the new Constitution, which indeed calls for a strong chief of State, above pressure groups, not suspected of partisanship and political ambitions. And it is well known that de Gaulle hopes for a reconciliation of the destinies of France with those of the royal house.)

It is understandable that in the present circumstances the main support of the nationalist aspiration, the focal point of their hopes, is the Army.

Much has been written about the army in Algeria since the beginning of 1956, when the war effort had been stepped up (incidentally, under the Socialist Guy Mollet), and particularly since May 13. Some of my interlocutors spoke of the Algerian high officers, Salan, Massu, Lacheroy, Goussault, as one did, fifteen years ago, of Jodl, von Mannstein, Raeder, von Kluge. Others speak of them with the fervor inspired by the belief that these men in uniform are undertaking nothing less than the salvation of France.

I would not say that the truth is in the middle, because those who speak today in the name of the army in Algeria have nothing but contempt for the men of the system. On the other hand, however, although by temperament, mentality, and education the officers of May 13 have much in common with the traditional French Right, they are proud of having distanced both the old Maurassian doctrine and the Algerian colons' reactionary attitude. During the long years of the war in Indochina they have learned two things: first, that in the twentieth century concern for the material well-being of the masses is the cornerstone of all policy; second, that to counteract the monopoly that Marxism has secured in this domain (especially in the vast, fermenting areas of Asia and Africa), the adversaries of Communism must adopt the latter's revolutionary technique and propaganda-psychology.

Hence the serious study of Lenin and Mao, hence the books and articles of Colonels Lacheroy and Goussault on the myth of French "presence," which must be promoted at the same time as the substantial and sincerely conceived social reforms. Hence also the pre-referendum directives of how to win the Arabs over to de Gaulle and to the new French-African community he is building.

When we consider the Army's new, political role in France, we should bear in mind that in Latin countries, whether in Spain or in South America, the army is never a negligible entity, and that its support or benevolent neutrality is often an important factor of political stability. Moreover, for the last twenty years, during which the traditionally accepted structure and philosophy of democracy have been challenged with increasing violence, routine-loving politicians have had to yield to men representing new ideas and having more dynamism to institute new policies. Thus it is not surprising that the military—the "intellectualized" military, one should perhaps say—try their hands at the ideologies which agitate our times, and that particularly in countries undergoing important transformations, they profit by the discipline and the hierarchical structure which is by definition theirs. That they do not necessarily abuse their power—as the lamenting French Left would have us believe—was demonstrated in Argentina where

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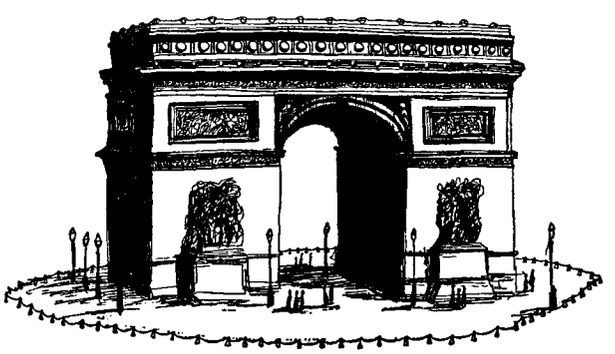
finally the army and the navy drove out Péron and turned over the country to a legally elected government.

THE PRESENT power and significance of the Army in Algeria must be explained by the key position of this territory in determining French history for generations to come. A country so keenly humiliated by defeat, occupation, and a policy of retreat since 1945 attaches a real as well as a symbolic value to its ability to stay on in Africa.

As far as interference by the Big Two is concerned, realistic Frenchmen say that France's chance consists in the fact that the United States—having learned by recent experience which contradicts its rigid anti-colonialism—would prefer to see a reasserted French leadership in Africa rather than Soviet infiltration under the disguise of nationalism. And the Russians, rather than risk American political and economic penetration in the aftermath of French withdrawal, prefer, for the moment at least, the presence of France and even the strong hand of de Gaulle.

In the eyes of Frenchmen on the one hand and of the African leaders who speak for the masses of Negroes and Arabs on the other, the future of the Franco-African relationship will not be decided simply by a new Constitution, no matter how well adapted to the needs of the day. The Constitution will not be able to correspond indefinitely to a constantly changing situation, and there is little doubt that a reactivated French nationalism will sooner or later clash with the dynamic forces called into being by the African desire for independence. Most of French Africa's articulate leaders today, Houphouet-Boigny, Mamadou Dia, Leopold Senghor, Sekou Touré, are realistic men who appreciate the economic, social and cultural benefits of their ties with France, and who understand also that France protects them from the necessity, faced by small, newly independent nations, of maneuvering among the world's great power blocs: Anglo-Saxon, Communist, Afro-Asian.

Yet these African leaders know that, like Bourguiba and Mohammed V, they too will be pushed farther and farther away from France by the fanatic nationalists in their own ranks, by labor leaders and student groups. And they fear, again like the President of Tunisia and the Sultan of Morocco, the fate of King Faisal. Once they are overwhelmed by the extremists, whose ideal is of course Nasser and his policy of obtaining the most from both sides, they fear that the possibility of an intelligently conducted maturing process would be thrown away for the doubtful outcome of an adventure.



What about the Frenchmen in metropolitan France who are now asked to enter into a real partnership with millions of people across the Mediterranean, and to make considerable financial sacrifices in order to give an economically serious meaning to the Franco-African community? It is important that we understand the prevalent attitudes towards this complex problem, which is, of course, merely postponed, not solved, by the referendum and the new Constitution.

First, there is the attitude of the average Frenchman who, while trusting de Gaulle, expects no miracles from the fraternization which the General sponsors and symbolizes by his repeated tours in the overseas territories. The average Frenchman is a conservative whose bourgeois instincts cause him to fear eighty to a hundred African deputies in the National Assembly. He is also worried by the prospects of the enormous investments that progress would require in Africa.

Then there is the attitude, or rather the cold calculation of certain industrial and business circles, which dampens the enthusiasm of the partisans of French presence by showing that from a strictly economic point of view Africa is not an asset for France but a liability. A recent article in *Le Monde* argues that French Africa's volume of import from France is rather insignificant, as is its export to areas of strong currency. As an example of French losses the article mentions the fact that France would have an ideal outlet in Brazil for her heavy equipment production, if she, in turn, could absorb a large part of Brazilian coffee export. Such a deal, however, is made impossible by the priority that African coffee has on the French market.

It is therefore understandable that in some circles the demand to stop "subsidizing" Africa becomes stronger every day. When the African nationalists threaten with secession, hardboiled French businessmen react by saying: all right, let them have their way; "let us condemn them to independence." The economic plight of Morocco and Tunisia indicates that this might be quite a harsh sentence.

THE AUTHOR of the article just quoted, André Blanchet, concludes that purely economic interests should not and actually do not determine the future of Franco-African relationship, which is woven from many human ties as well. And of course no important political leader, certainly not in de Gaulle's circle, thinks of putting the African territories on the scale of

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profit versus loss. On the contrary: the third attitude towards the African situation which I wish to mention is dictated by a very genuine desire to build a community with the overseas population.

We in the United States tend to condemn colonialism as a monstrous domination of man over man; this is, of course, a simplistic and partially false picture, because it takes no account of the rapports that are created constantly and on every level between the members of the two races. In spite of the vicissitudes of colonial history these rapports inevitably tend to bring about equality, the kind which is anchored in friendship and understanding before it assumes legal forms. In the opinion of my "right-wing," nationalist interlocutors, the events of May 13 have merely dispersed the *malaise* and the misunderstanding, and will now contribute to the acceleration of the process of emancipation.

Everybody agrees that de Gaulle has an immense prestige in the eyes of the African population. His opponents say this prestige is the fast-disappearing remnant of the moral capital built up during the war years; his partisans argue that Arabs and Negroes—and Frenchmen as well—understand the language of authority which is de Gaulle's, and appreciate the promises which, for once, are likely to be kept. And then there is human nature itself and its innate respect for power —a fact we shamefacedly try to deny. The Arab intellectuals of North Africa, I was told by more than one observer returning from there, say they are for France if France knows how to govern at home and overseas; they will turn toward Nasser the day French authority again hesitates as in the recent years. And let it be said for France that they would do so with true regret.

My conclusion, if any is needed, is simply this: a summer's close contact with France, French events and people, has strengthened my conviction that it is needless, entirely uncalled-for, for us to ask: *Quo vadis,* France? There are wonderful virtues in that nation, and an inexhaustible reservoir of ideas. A German journalist said to me that France will soon be the leading power of Europe, for "behind every German worker we must put a foreman; the French work best when left to themselves." He referred to the industrial potential of France; I believe that it is true of her political future also.

France's Verdict on de Gaulle II

Hour of Decision

by ROBERT BARRAT

ON SEPTEMBER 28, in the fourth referendum since 1944, the French people will vote on General de Gaulle's proposal to modify the Constitution. Most of this summer's discussion of the project has meant little to the average Frenchman, who has been sunbathing on the Atlantic or the Mediterranean. And what would an industrial worker from Billancourt or a peasant from the Limoges country make of such terms as monocancerism, bicephalous, confederation or federation, motion of censure and so on? What interests him is the cost of steak, the market price of wheat or the state of the weather. Three-quarters of the electorate will cast their votes in line with party slogans—and the degree of their enthusiasm for General de Gaulle himself.

What discussion there is now proceeds at several levels. Some hold on principle that the Assembly had no right to give up its fundamental prerogative. Back in November 1940, in Brazzaville, de Gaulle himself declared that it was illegal for the Vichy Assembly to delegate its constitutional powers solely to one man. Yet now a military coup in Algiers and the threat of a revolt have, in a similar manner, put the General in control. The powers which the Assembly has delegated to him, his opponents hold, must also be considered invalid.

Other critics do not attach such importance to the way in which de Gaulle came to power. They admit that at the time the General represented the lesser evil, preferable to having the colonels in the saddle. But they declare that the 1946 Constitution is not so bad and that it is fatuous to believe that French policy is to be transformed by changes in wording, or that political figures lacking in intelligence and courage are thereby automatically to be endowed with such qualities. The main defect of the 1946 Constitution is the lack of sufficient power for the executive, but in fact no French republican government has exercised such great powers

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as those enjoyed by Mollet, Bourges or Gaillard during the last months of the Assembly.

De Gaulle has now had plenary powers for three months, and he has not succeeded in exacting obedience from Algiers. Will the fact of being President of the Republic, endowed with greater powers than the Queen of England, give him any greater authority over the colonels and the committees of public safety than he has had since June?

The answer to these arguments is that our institutions stand in great need of reform. A good Constitution does not automatically produce great statesmen. But a bad Constitution does create havoc. Through fear of dictatorship the authors of the 1946 Constitution deprived the President of the Council in advance of the means of governing and made the executive permanently inferior to the Assembly. They likewise curtailed the sources of power vested in the people themselves.

In contrast to the procedure in England and the United States, where the people vote for a party leader they know will be head of the government, the people in France vote for ephemeral party coalitions, never for a government or a ministerial program. Millions gave their vote to the Republican Front in 1956 in the expectation that Pierre Mendes-France would become President of the Council; but all they got a few weeks later was Guy Mollet.

STABILIZATION, personification of power, those are the two points on which many republicans are in agreement on Constitutional reform. But this reform should make our political democracy more effectual, not imperil or suppress it. The strengthening of the executive could have been brought about first by changes in the internal workings of the Assembly and then (and primarily) through election of the head of the government by universal suffrage. Stability could have been achieved by creating a government by the legislature: when a government was overturned by an adverse vote, the legislature would automatically be dissolved and the voters would return to the polls.

Such is the basic reform the republicans and parties of the Left should have introduced in our institutions a number of years ago. That would doubtless have prevented the present collapse and spared us a dictatorship many believed to be inevitable from that time on. That the Left has always been distrustful of a strong executive is its greatest fault in this matter, as an executive can function effectively only if he is assured of a certain security in office and protected from the harassment of irresponsible politicians. The essential thing was to assure the control of this executive by the elected Assembly, and the limitation of the authority of the executive by the deliberative body would remain the foundation of our democracy.

The republicans themselves were unable to take the initiative required for the necessary institutional reforms and many deeply regret it. De Gaulle leaves them no alternative but to answer Yes or No. And many feel that two weeks is an insufficient time for the citizens to study the proposed texts—or for the parties to plan their lines of action.

A negative response seems to mean a rejection of necessary reforms—which might open the way to a fascist adventure. What will happen on September 29 if the country turns down the Gaullist Constitution? The General will return to his village as he has promised and the drama will be resumed from the point it left off last June, with all the dangers and difficulties still unresolved.

But to vote Yes is perhaps equally to open the way to adventure and to a Constitutional program which might have been appropriate for France in 1830 but hardly in the mid-twentieth century. Bonapartism, Orleanism, Caesarism—these are among the accusations voiced in this unhappy context. And there is indeed much that is disquieting about the prospect.

ON THE ONE HAND the new Constitution sets up a two-fold authority which will have great difficulty in functioning. The President of the Republic will be the strong man of tomorrow's regime (unquestionably this will be the General himself). He is to be elected by a college of notables, who select him independently of the French Parliament, and in view of the social complexion of this college, the President will be the representative of rural and conservative France. He will govern, since he will negotiate treaties and appoint the civil and military personnel. He will also appoint the Prime Minister, no longer to receive investiture at the hands of the Assembly. But in carrying out orders, this Prime Minister will be responsible to the Assembly—for the acts of another, the President of the Republic.

How can such an arrangement work? "Either," as André Philip, former minister of de Gaulle in Free France, writes, "the Prime Minister, supported by the Assembly, will claim authority and come into conflict with the President, or the Assembly, discontented with the President's policy, will systematically reverse all his Prime Ministers and jeopardize his authority. In that event the President will dissolve the Assembly, and if the people support the Assembly, the President will have to go."

But there is something even more serious, something which frightens all enemies of personal power in France. Not only will the President of the Republic have the right to dissolve Parliament once a year but under exceptional circumstances he can become head of the country, without any limitations on his authority. I refer to the famous Article 14, which actually pro-

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vides for the setting up of a dictatorship in what I will, in order to protect myself from prosecution, call the Roman sense of that term. But in Rome it was at the behest of the Senate that the Consuls took Cincinnatus away from his plow. Who will decide whether "the institutions of the Republic, the integrity of its territory and the independence of the Nation are in grave and immediate danger?" That decision will be made by the Constitutional Council, a small college of a few men named by the Chief of State, upon whom his authority will have infinitely more influence than on the four hundred to five hundred deputies comprising the National Assembly.

What are the limits to this power? Would not the war in Algeria, for example, constitute a threat to France's territorial integrity? If the General-President should decide a few weeks after September 28 to do without legislative elections and govern by decree, what legal means would there be of opposing him? He will not do this, of course—at least, not at once. But what if the war in Algeria continues, causing in France more and more social and political troubles and incidents of violence similar to those of last May? What will the men of the Left, the intellectuals and the members of the clergy who favor negotiations with Algeria be able to do then? And what would they be able to accomplish against a power that would accuse them, if they press for such negotiations, of being accomplices of the "enemies of France" and "murderers of our soldiers"?

THIS CONSTITUTION is perhaps tailored to de Gaulle But did he really need it in order to straighten things out? France does not stand in need of a monarchical corset but rather of men who will help their country by addressing it in truthful terms. I admit that the danger is not de Gaulle. He is not a fascist general in the historical sense of the term. But the Gaullist Constitution could be the Trojan horse of fascism. Behind de Gaulle, no matter how imposing his stature, loom the disturbing shadows of the colonels of Algiers.

Criticisms such as these would have been greatly moderated in France if de Gaulle had been willing to consider the proposals of certain democrats who were not initially hostile to him. These suggestions centered on the incompatibility between the parliamentary mandate and the ministerial function, the referendum on the electoral law which will provide for the selection of the deputies in the first assemblies and the referendum on the opportunity to make Constitutional revisions. Since the electoral body cannot amend the questions that are submitted to it, it might at least be permitted to vote Yes or No as to whether the Constitution needed revision. That would permit a large number of citizens not in agreement with the new project to register the fact that although they did not seek a return to the old system they were seeking the convocation of a Constituent Assembly.

On these points raised by friendly critics the General has given the unfortunate impression that he wanted to rush things through and force the hand of the electorate. Doubtless he will win out, for the propositions dealing with overseas territories seem liberal enough to the African parties to win several million votes in favor of the Constitution. And have not the colonels in Algiers announced that three million Algerian Moslems will cast an enthusiastic Yes for the task of national renewal?

But it is the results in France itself that will be decisive. If twenty per cent of the voters abstain, as in 1945 and 1946, the battle will remain open, for the various parties of the Left can mobilize from thirty to forty per cent of the vote against the proposed Constitution. Once again the deciding element will be the attitude of the Socialist Party. Although its Secretary-General, M. Mollet, is a minister and admirer of de Gaulle's, a majority of the parliamentary members of the party's Executive Committee are opposed to the proposal.

Whatever the results of the referendum, legislative elections are to be held a few weeks later. Will new political figures come forward? Will the Left unite? And will there be alliances between the Communist and non-Communist Left? Will the election campaigns take place in an atmosphere of freedom? Shall we not witness more demonstrations by the fascist groups which are now under orders to make no moves before the referendum?

After the slumber of the summer months French political life is in the process of awakening. Let us hope that this awakening will not take brutal forms.

LANDSCAPE FINALLY WITH FIGURE

The sky stainless, flawed by one gull
And stretched across no sight silk-tight;
Salt noon stranded like a hull
In clearest light;

Clarity of palms splits the sun
To strike and shiver on the blue blue view:
So perfection not ended nor begun
Is perfectly true.

The hollow setting (while the jewel lags),
Infinite, unsoiled, smiling, clear:
Appear!
Sly, dirty, cruel, lost and in rags
The beloved is here.

JOSEPHINE JACOBSEN.

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THE SCREEN

DANDY DANNY

CHARM is hard to define, but Danny Kaye certainly has it in "Me and the Colonel." And the picture, a comedy-drama without the songs and musical numbers that usually punctuate a Kaye opus, gives Danny every opportunity to win his audiences. Win them he does, as Jacobowsky in a poignant story about a certain Polish Jew who, though well-heeled, has had no easy time of life. He's definitely less than a dazzling success with the ladies; and he's spent most of his life trying to be a citizen of *some* country. He fled from Poland to Germany to Vienna to Prague to Paris. And now in 1940 he's trying to figure how to get out of France before the Germans take over. Being resourceful, he acquires a Rolls-Royce, which is promptly confiscated by a colonel, a Polish war hero who is on his way to the border town of Hendaye from where he'll be taken to England. Jacobowsky wisely attaches himself to Colonel Prokosny, but the colonel, an anti-Semitic aristocrat, looks down his nose at this Jewish nobody. The rest of the film describes the journey, during which Jacobowsky must not only outsmart the Germans but also win over the colonel.

Danny Kaye, who has played the role of the underdog before, does it expertly again—with perhaps a touch more mellowness and philosophical calm this time. He is a perfect foil for Curt Jurgens, who plays the colonel with an almost ridiculous pomp that fits the odd circumstances. No doubt Franz Werfel, who wrote the original play, "Jacobowsky and the Colonel," from which S. N. Behrman wrote the American version, from which, in turn, Behrman and George Froeschel wrote the movie script, wanted the colonel to be a pompous ass; but Director Peter Glenville, who did so well with the rest of the cast, allowed Jurgens to go too far in burlesquing this brave though unsympathetic hero-born-too-late. The colonel's quixotic and fearless behavior leads Jacobowsky to tell him that he has one of the finest minds of the twelfth century. But the colonel doesn't get the point.

Accompanying these two quite different men on their wild ride through France are the colonel's orderly, played with the right amount of heavy whimsy by Akim Tamiroff, and the colonel's mistress, played with sensitive beauty by Nicole Maurey; and lending local color along the way are Martita Hunt, Alexander Scourby, Françoise Rosay and others as various French and Germans. The script is pretty casual about the relationship between the colonel and his mistress and also somewhat vague as to what she sees in this stuffy, intolerant blue-blood. One is not surprised when she is charmed by Jacobowsky's thoughtfulness, gentle manners and wisdom. "Me and the Colonel" is clearly movie fare for discriminating adults.

William Goestz' production shuns the spectacular. It has effective black-and-white photography of the French countryside, and most of its scenes stress mood and characterization more than action. Although often amusing and delightful, the film takes a strong stand against war and intolerance. And most moving of all are the close-ups of Danny Kaye's expressive face—the face of all the patient, lovable, long-suffering Jacobowskys.

ALSO ON OUR screens are a couple of English films worthy of your attention. Although I remember Ronald Colman's 1935 version of "A Tale of Two Cities" as being more lively, the British re-make of the famous Dickens story has its points and should hold viewers engrossed. The plot, with its scene shifting between eighteenth-century London and Paris, is fool-proof for the movies in spite of the fact that it gets rather complicated at times. Betty E. Box has given her picture a handsome black-and-white production that mirrors well the precarious times; and Director Ralph Thomas, although relying somewhat on the audience's remembrance of Dickens, handles his large cast effectively.

Dirk Bogarde makes a striking Sydney Carton, the hard-drinking wastrel who dislikes himself but whose love for Lucie brings out the best in him. Dorothy Tutin is lovely as Lucie (another of Dickens' rather colorless heroines), the daughter of the long-imprisoned Dr. Manette (Stephen Murray), whose story is the key to the plot. Her marriage to Charles Darnay (Paul Gueras), whose aristocratic family is one of the most hated in France after the Revolution, provides the impetus for moving the principals to Paris where they are caught up in the swirl of the revengeful Revolutionaries. While the film does the two big trial scenes well (the one in London where Charles is tried as a spy, and the later one in Paris where he's sentenced to death as an aristocrat), it seems to muff some of the other pregnant events—such as the Revolution itself and the frightfully tense scene between Miss Pross (Athene Seyler) and Madame Defarge right before the finale. For fullest effect the Defarge Amazon should be hammed up more than Rosalie Crutchley plays her. But perhaps I'm carping. This "Tale" will no doubt win new fans to Dickens and fill former admirers with nostalgia. Even unsentimental detractors of Dickens will hardly be able to resist Carton's guillotine scene and "It is a far, far better, etc."

IT IS GOOD to see a film about Africa that is not mainly concerned with hunters, forgotten treasures or Tarzan. Such a movie is "The Naked Earth," made

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by the British on the Dark Continent and showing it as it was in the 1890's, when an Irishman (Richard Todd) goes to join a friend on a farm in Central Africa. He finds his friend dead and the friend's wife (who never married him) ready to leave in despair. But he stays and the woman lives with him and together they try to eke out a marginal living on the farm that never went well.

At times "The Naked Earth" is like a documentary with its excellent scenes of native life, farming, and later crocodile hunting—scenes that are filled with hard work, good times, bad times, discouragement and a feel for the naked earth. Director Vincent Sherman does not neglect the story in Milton Holmes' script, but it is such a simple story of defeats and victories that it too has a documentary air, as if all this were a record of what really happened to these people in this strange land.

Todd is excellent as the Irishman who has more courage than sense; and Juliette Greco gives a vibrant, moving performance as a girl from the streets of Marseilles who came here to start a new life. Outstanding in the support cast are Finlay Currie as the missionary priest who persuades them to get married (as an example to his parishioners) and John Kitzmiller as a native who becomes Todd's good friend. "The Naked Earth" may not have the polish of studio-made films, but it has an atmosphere of reality that many a finished movie lacks.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

THE STAGE

REPORT FROM STRATFORD

THE ARDOR which has been committed to the Shakespeare Festival at Stratford, Connecticut is one of the most impressive of contemporary theatrical energies. Mr. John Houseman and Mr. Jack Landau, who are responsible for these Festivals, might so easily be doing the glossy and the fast, seizing, in their flush of notoriety, the main chance; yet here they have labored four seasons at this fierce goal, building and enhancing not a national theater—until our life, social and cultural, deepens in texture, I fear that possibility will remain a glamorous fiction—but an ensemble with some roots, however tenuous; with at least a gathering identity, a move towards definition. And at this point of time, one may see what is rather inchoately taking shape: eminently an American "project," tentative still in its markings, but expressive already of our excellences as a people and, somewhat more emphatically, of our attendant defects. The enterprise at Stratford is a remarkable illustration of American attack in the less manageable world of value and art.

It would seem that the policy at Stratford—there are rumors of expansion—is to compose a repertory out of one each of the major comedies and tragedies, and to flavor the whole with something choice and often exotic: a play usually not so finished in imagination, but again one not smashed by familiarity into our protesting consciousness: "Measure for Measure" or "Much Ado" or, this season, "The Winter's Tale." Though there is doubtless a harmony of aid and intention in the entire repertory, Mr. Landau has elected, as the rule, to work the lighter vein, and Mr. Houseman the darker; there is often a baffling but fruitful interchange evident in the season's third "sport."

Mr. Landau's personality and methods—I suppose one might even say his style—are very much in the pragmatic American grain. He sees the Shakespearean play under no dispensation of form, but rather as a sequence of set pieces, each of which he will endeavor energetically to make *work*. Immensely skilled, often incomparable, indeed, in the devising of stage business, Mr. Landau made this season, of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," a capital occasion, volatile, plastic, a riot of diversion. It seemed to me almost continuously a refreshment of pleasure, but it seemed to me, too, at the moment and later, a little common: common because it divorced the play wholly from that realm of lyric spirit in which it has its only vital being. "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is, after all, a ceremonial play, written almost certainly to grace a marriage, and full of courtly assumptions about the order of society and of love. What is witty, and indeed comic, in the work must find its stress and proportion only within the scheme of those assumptions. So it is that Theseus and Hippolyta carry the weight of love's aristocracy and celebration, and the middle-class Athenians the motif of its sportive judgments; love as grotesquerie is incarnated in the rustics, and the numinous world of sprites and elves lights up for us a whole realm of amorous caprice and idleness and fertile lunacy. The whole of "The Dream" is an intricate round, marvelously figured, on love's impulse, its sweet disorder and intimate revel, and if the play clearly has not the stately pavane and mannered melancholy of "Twelfth Night," lacks the vernal ripeness of "As You Like It" and the open Renaissance splendor of "The Merchant of Venice," it can yet start, as all of these in their ideal glamour and completion, a small riot in the heart.

Nor is this emotional gush, but a precise statement of value. For the final harmony of Shakespearean comedy is a passage beyond mere character and plot and wit, and indeed a dissolution of them: in its last poise, a form has been found for the flowering of what was one of the loveliest of all interior lives. If Yeats thought the ultimate reality of imagination in Shake-

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speare to be *disastrous,* in these comedies it is yet sweet; and to give not an echo of that sweetness—to diminish joy into fun, and wisdom into efficiency—is to fail all this world of bright life and grace and lyricism. It is only, of course, by such absolute touchstones that the Stratford "Dream" may be said to fail, for it is elsewhere, everywhere, all vivacity and zest; still, criticism is the practice of discriminations, and Mr. Landau, who is responsible for the quality of this production, is too intent and ambitious a theater artist not to wish the strictest truth of response.

Of Mr. Houseman, not less may be said, and rather more should, I imagine; yet it is distressing to find almost nothing to praise in his "Hamlet." One might make an easy wit at the expense of this production, with its baseball park decor—Ophelia was buried in what seemed to be an orange crate—its pictorial dullness and static patterns, its antiseptic want of personal flavor; but that would be stupid stuff and unworthy not only of Mr. Houseman's private self, but of his distinctive and eclectic talent. We must take this event of "Hamlet," I propose, as but one of the mistakes of any artist's career, and look to other things. Since it gave no evidence of concept, felt life or idea, it cannot be said to exist esthetically, and thus does not fall within the necessities of criticism.

If this seems peremptory, I must nonetheless let it stand, adding my own bafflement to the general confusion. "Hamlet" may be—who has suggested it?—pre-eminently the work with which our culture must come to terms, and whether those terms focus about (to cite but two recent accounts) Mr. Francis Fergusson's concept of the play as a ritual exposure of pollution, or Mr. Maynard Mack's poem of mortality and devious seemingness, interpretation is the indispensable. Else the play becomes a barbarism, a collection of dry bones from Bartlett's graveyard, with the audience a pious crew of hounds, snapping each greedily after his nice bit of "truth." It was thus at Stratford, and ever will be, when "Hamlet" is not dominated by *idea,* nor seen as more than an abstract Shakespearean homage, or occasion of personal exhibitionism.

In this vein, I must record a curious impression of the Stratford seasons, and one which may have bearing on the nullity of Mr. Houseman's production. The permanent company—apart from guest "stars" doing, sometimes well but more often quite unhappily, "something in Shakespeare"—the ensemble is composed of many talented young persons, most of whom have made some small theatrical stir, usually off-Broadway. A few of these are splendid in character work (Mr. Ellis Rabb, for one); all speak clearly, with none of the mooning hoo-hah (but yet, no musical delight in sound); several are interesting presences (Mr. John Colicos, with his dusky, romantic command and temperament). Yet not once, in either of these Stratford productions, did I sense a beautiful spirit, rich in aspiration or wonder or unnameable knowledge. Shakespearean drama, as indeed all great drama, is wrought out of the densest stuffs of life, and can be made viable only by moving through the texture of a soul which has truly *measured* experience. And the actor's art, supremely, takes on the final reality of all art only when he releases greatness in the terms of his own great nature.

Great natures, of course, are not to be had by taking thought, nor is the hooliganism of American spiritual and cultural life sympathetic to their breeding. And yet, our piety insists on a *raison d'être* for "doing" Shakespeare, and so we have evolved two pretty myths which dominate production ideology in this age of the amateur: the curious illusion that Shakespeare is an aspect of the democratic canon, that he belongs somehow to *you,* like a neglected fifth freedom; and the equally wondrous fantasy that his theater exists largely as a kind of gymnasium, in which players may flex and develop their techniques.

It must be admitted that the Stratford enterprise is not untainted by either of these fallacies. Of the first, it must be said what is recognized by any person of sensibility, that Shakespeare is not something permanent in nature, another sun or moon, shining alike on the just and the unjust, the wise man and the fool: he is artificial and complex and various and vulnerable, and democratic appeals to the standards of an untutored public, whether of students or what you will, do little to reveal his inmost quality. Shakespeare, when he is not respected with the labor of interpretation and wonder, is not only incomprehensible, he is very, very dull: this is known so surely as to need no stress.

To the second notion—that Shakespearean drama is a school for actors—one must be gentler, but not much. There are, who would deny, these magnificences of character and passion, ranges of grace, malignity, wild vision, mountains on which body and soul may hang. Yet is there not enough, too, in all of this, to knock the fear of God into the actor—force him to humility and awe and fierce self-demands—this knowledge that he is the momentary vessel of one of the greatest treasures of all human imagining? So much, then, for all of that, nor would one wish to make a diligent ensemble of young players, unripened in their art, bear the weight of complaints against our society and our culture. Yet what is needed in Shakespearean production in the American theater is nothing less than the

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regular and honored commitment of our fullest talents, a miracle which the Stratford enterprise may yet bring within possibility. That alone might project Shakespeare out of the pale flush of piety, and into the burning and terrible life of images, by which he has told so much of our history.

The physical theater at Stratford remains a distinguished pleasure to the eye and to the bones. I continue to be scandalized by the brisk lobby trade in Shakespearean gimcracks, yet there is, after all, that grassy bank, where the wild thyme may or may not grow, but where you may sit and take your lunch, musing on the Housatonic. This pastoral joy is sure to be interrupted, however, by elves from the afternoon "Dream" sporting on the lawn, or by a marauding band of Elizabethans, in grimy T-shirts, making with the foils for the evening "Hamlet." A *very* summer theater touch, this, and a great blunder. David Belasco used to hoard some last crumbs of theater glamour by forbidding actresses in his plays to be seen in public; we might justly wish, then, for the "Dream" fairies to be kept *out* of the bottom of the garden. Unfortunately, but still, the pilgrimage to Stratford without a car is enough to have daunted Chaucer, and something must be done about a restaurant: it is not possible to face Shakespeare on the strength of ersatz coffee and the dubious solace of root beer.

RICHARD HAYES.

COMMUNICATIONS

"BAD NEWS FROM ARKANSAS"

New Orleans, La.

TO THE EDITORS: The overwhelming and glorious victory of Governor Orval E. Faubus of Arkansas [Aug. 15] is apparently a surprise to you. If this is so, you are certainly the only people in the United States who did not expect it. The surprise is that his majority was only seventy-five per cent, and not ninety-five to ninety-eight.

There was never a time, nor will there ever be a time when integration would have been acceptable to the people of Arkansas or any other State in the South, and nothing that the President could have said or done would have altered this fact. The reason is that the people of the South object to having integration thrust down their throats to appease the Negro and Communist-sympathizer voters of a few key Northern cities. The President's handling of this matter is typical of his usual bungling, and it is only one of a multitude of mistakes that will mark him as one of the most unsatisfactory and ineffectual Presidents we have ever had.

Nothing as morally and inherently wrong as integration can ever be thrust upon the South by Northern politicians and certain uninformed and misled segments of the Northern press. It will be fought by every resource at the command of the South—and believe me our resources are considerable. In the end, or when bayonets invade our land again, if such a step should be necessary, without hesitation, the South will abolish its public school system.

However, I confidently do not expect this calamity in my lifetime. While the Supreme Court ordered integration, it did not specify immediately. The order to integrate can and will be delayed beyond our lifetime. A Democratic victory in the next Presidential election is a foregone conclusion, minimizing the importance of the Negro vote in key Northern cities, the thirteen Southern States voting en bloc, the possible abolition of the antiquated Electoral College, curbing of the dangerous powers of the Supreme Court, a growing anti-integration sentiment in the North will change the picture considerably in the years to come. No, do not look for integration in *your* lifetime.

JOHN C. COMBE.

"AMERICA'S FARM PROBLEM"

Ryegate, Mont.

TO THE EDITORS: Mr. Martell may be interested in knowing that his letter on "America's Farm Problem" [Aug. 29] infuriated at least one reader.

While I am painfully aware that the current agricultural crisis will undoubtedly end in the permanent eclipse of the family farm, this doesn't mean that the family farm is a bad, inefficient or unrealistic vocation. What it means is that it can't compete with corporate farming. As a small (comparatively speaking) operation it is being overwhelmed by the big. Mass farm production is systematically wiping all small "competition" as surely as G.M. and Ford wiped out the small "competition" of Nash, Studebaker, etc. In this game of monopoly, tradition, competence, quality and "people" become side issues. The slogan becomes "the first with the most."

I take exception to Mr. Martel's image of the "family-sized" farmer as an "amazingly large number" of men "too ignorant, too lazy or too greedily in pursuit of short-term gains to make a genuine long-term investment in their land." Perhaps perspective is too close but for one living in a completely rural parish in daily and intimate contact with farmers, Mr. Martel's statement is not only unjustified—it is untrue.

The battle for the family farm may end in defeat, but not without a magnificent and courageous fight for a true vocation by men who believe in farming not just as another "business enterprise" but as a way of life.

(Rev.) JAMES F. KITTLESON.

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De-Christianization of the World

TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL. By Charles Péguy. Translated by Alexander Dru. Harper. $3.50.

By PHILIP DEASY

THE FIRST of a proposed three or four volume work covering the main body of Charles Péguy's prose writings, *Temporal and Eternal* is appropriately titled. The two abridged essays (*cahiers* was the author's name for them; they were originally written in 1910) which comprise this first volume were selected chiefly because, as Alexander Dru notes in his concise and illuminating introduction, there are no other writings of Péguy's "which go from a number of points simultaneously to the heart of Péguy's matter: Christianity in the modern world."

The de-Christianization of the modern world might express that matter more accurately. It is a de-Christianization all the more terrible in its tragic consequence because it is denied; and it is denied by none more vehemently than by those who, as Péguy depicts it with a forthrightness American readers may find a bit breathtaking, if not downright shocking, are the chief cause of the tragedy: the clergy. "The real problem is that the modern world is an unChristian world, *which has succeeded perfectly well in doing without Christianity.*" (Italics Péguy's). The "grossest error" to be made in any analysis of the condition is to see the modern world as still Christian, only more sinful than its predecessors.

The key Péguy words, *mystique* and *politique,* recur repeatedly in these essays, particularly as descriptive terms in explaining the deterioration both of Christianity and the Republic. The Christian *mystique* is "that mortice, that dovetailing of the temporal and the eternal. Everything collapses once that adjustment is unsettled, or out of the true, or taken to pieces. The very center: that is what it is, the engagement of the eternal in the temporal. Do away with that link and there is nothing left. . . . No Christianity left. It is divorced from its technique." In more homely fashion Péguy distinguishes between the *mystique* and the *politique* of the Republic: "The republican *mystique* was when one died for the Republic; the political republic, the republican *politique,* is, as at present, that one should live off it."

Because he sees the Dreyfus affair (and no one gave himself more ardently in defense of the accused Jewish officer than Péguy) as "a unique example of what is meant by the degradation of a human action . . . and more than that, a précis of the degradation of a *mystique* into a *politique,*" the greater part of the first essay, "Memories of Youth" is taken up with what can only be called a shattering analysis of that famous crisis in French history. The remainder of the essay is an exposition of Péguy's early socialism as "a religion of temporal salvation seeking to restore health to the world of the worker by restoring health to work and the world of work." The second essay, "Clio I," (so titled because it is a long monologue by the goddess of History spoken to the author) treats more directly and fully the de-Christianization theme, although here, more so than in the first essay, are "those endless variations on a theme" characteristic of Péguy's rhetorical method. It is a method long on emphasis and short on unity and coherence.

In one of his frequent asides M. Péguy remarks of "the implacable, impeccable, invincible reasoning and logic of M. Maurras" (as expressed in the *Action Française*) that "it just didn't take. . . . It doesn't bite." Nothing of the sort can be said of these essays. They take . . . and they bite. They can be recommended without hesitation as an effective psychological therapeutic for our current gray-flannelled placidity and middle-browism, or better still, as the wisdom of sanctity instead of "the wisdom of the ordinary."

For such an unusual kind of rewarding reading Mr. Alexander Dru, the translator, must be accorded an acclaim scarcely less than that deserved by M. Péguy. Mr. Dru's modest aim was to produce a readable version of an author so often turgid in his own language that François Mauriac once remarked it was a pity someone didn't translate Péguy into French. To say that Mr. Dru succeeded in the more difficult task of translating M. Péguy into English is to understate a remarkable achievement.

Karl Shapiro's New Poems

POEMS OF A JEW. By Karl Shapiro. Random. $3.50.

By JOHN LOGAN

KARL SHAPIRO'S poems are inspirational in the simple sense that after reading him one goes back to the work of his own life freshened and reflective, stirred with an example of human achievement, an example of what a man can come to. I think in this sense all art is moral, bringing about in the reader, viewer or hearer a thirst for whatever responsibility it is necessary for him to assume in order to function excellently. Of course this can only happen honestly and in actuality when the art work is indeed excellent. Otherwise there is present always some element of the lie. I dwell on this because I have a strong sense that this thing of human excellence is what Shapiro's book is about.

"The object of poetry is to make man unashamed," Shapiro said in a lecture I heard him give a couple of years ago. His poems effect this, quietly, with exquisite craft, and without genius—which is a luxury the person who is in need of art (and who is not) cannot depend on.

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There are an introduction and notes, also by Shapiro. The introduction has to do with the sense in which the word *Jew* is to be taken in the title *Poems of a Jew.* (Shapiro emphasizes that it is not to be taken religiously.) The notes are comments on a dozen of the poems. The name of Freud appears five times in the brief two pages of notes.

What Shapiro's introduction says is what the poems themselves say. I distinguish between the two meanings *"poems* of a Jew" and "poems of a *Jew"* and find that either meaning without the other falsifies. Karl Shapiro is a poet: his sense of what a poet is, is conditioned by his self-knowledge of himself as a Jew. His sense of what the Jew is, if I understand the introduction, is conditioned by his self-knowledge of the poet. I make this judgment admitting my own ignorance of the Jew, but taking heart from Shapiro's statement here that it is Leopold Bloom, Joyce's character, in whom the mien of "the free modern Jew [is] celebrated so perfectly." For Leopold Bloom is the most fully drawn human being whom literature has kept. He has top, bottom, inside, outside, dream, feeling, intelligence, heart, genital, conscious and unconscious; and he undergoes the peculiar human suffering which attends the smallest measure of clear self-vision, the thing that makes any change, and so any human excellence, possible. Bloom is precisely that which Shapiro here describes as the modern Jew: "Man in all his raw potentiality." And here is the true meaning of the concept of exile, in which the Jew as a figure meets the artist: that the potentiality *remains* raw, only somewhat advanced, as man remains separated from his true self and from his true home, unplumbed, mysterious, but capable of love and excellence. The two qualities belong together because both of them build to a higher unity, and preserve.

A bit strangely, the poems of this book are nearly all of them to be found in other volumes still in print with the same publisher—in the collection *Poems 1940-1953* and in the original books where each appeared, *Person Place and Thing* (1942) or *V-Letter and Other Poems,* which received the Pulitzer prize in 1945, or *Trial of a Poet* (1947). A handful of these poems, which are by no means all Shapiro has written since his last book, are new. The poems are assembled together here because they have some relation thematically, or more tangentially, to the Jewish Identity which has formed Shapiro as a poet and which has followed him in his career as Consultant in Poetry at the Library of Congress, teacher and editor.

Most of the new poems continue to employ the normal English line, unobtrusively rhymed and free of special diction, which Shapiro has championed theoretically and since the beginning of his practice. All of them show the drive to understand and to be understood which always marks his work and which his new title, together with the presence of introduction and notes, reflects. They include a couple of occasional poems commissioned for Jewish celebrations. I like best of the recent poems in the book "The First Time," but I would not put any of them beside the best of his whole production.

The new poem "The First Time" catches strongly an intermediate step in the sequence of emergence from boyish into adult love, a sequence including in this book the remarkably moving prose poem "The Dirty Word," which is about the child's guilty delight in obscenity, "The Confirmation," a complexly realized poem about self-gratification, "The First Time," and finally "V-Letter," which is the husband's solace in his wife and his plaint at her long absence.

The "Adam and Eve" sequence belongs before and behind all these poems about love and is itself about love—and creation and art and exile and survival and human excellence. It is a suite of six poems of unusual power, understanding and beauty, a triumph in American letters to which attention must be paid, and in my opinion the meaning of Karl Shapiro's new work, the plot of his poems, introduction and notes.

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Life and Spirit of India

HOUSE OF MANY ROOMS. By Robin White. Harper. $3.50.

By JOHN A. LYNCH

IT IS THE spirit that moves this book of India, rather freely described as a "novel." True, there is a connection between the chapters—they are all highly readable entrances into an American missionary's household in Meigudy—but the notion of plot or even of progression is anomalous and the idea of "novel" is discarded in favor of yet one more reflection on life in South India in what must be, roughly, the 1940's.

The book does progress, of course, but it is the turning and twisting of the spirit that is important. Divided into three parts, the book views Meigudy first through the sometimes astonished, sometimes mischievous, often perceptive eyes of Sammy Fisher, aged fourteen plus. In the second part it views through the author's enlightened eye the articles of death, birth and moving away; and then, in a final chapter, it looks back years later when the missionary's wife, widowed, now in her sixties, her children established in America and happily seasoned in business, returns to the house in Meigudy to find that the "insidious fingernails of time had picked mercilessly over everything."

The book opens with an account of a trip by oxcart—"an enormous open job"—from Meigudy to Thappur, where missionary Ernest Fisher is expected to correct the malpractices of a Christian community largely gone awry under a deacon who has set himself up as a kind of Pope and allows a grotesque, but satisfying, mixture of Hinduism and Christianity to prevail. Reverend Mr. Fisher and the deacon, suddenly finding common ground in a discussion of the Bible, share to the last drop two flasks of Communion wine, and the good intentions of reform are undone.

In other chapters, a Hindu ghost is discovered on the stairs by Barney, aged six and a half, a wife is sought and secured for Manikkam the butler, a dancing girl arrives as the wife of Svamidas the cook, and Aaron, aged seventeen, stripped to a loincloth and body smeared with ashes, adopts for several months the role of holy man. These events are described by the author, who was born and brought up in India and came to this country at sixteen, with a decent lack of sociological and religious exposition, and should be taken not as any attempt to explain the "mysterious East" but as pleasurable sketches of that East that is not altogether familiar to us.

It is only in the last chapter of part one that tragedy penetrates life in Meigudy. Aaron, finding it time to figure things out for himself, refuses one Sunday to go to church. Sammy, whom Aaron taunts as a "dumb missionary kid," taunts him in return and follows him to a spit of land where Aaron, missing his footing, falls into a river and is swept away to be smashed against the stone support of a bridge.

It is Sammy's sense of guilt that figures most strongly in the second part of the book, where he asks the question, "How does one get happy?" and finds the most puzzling yet the surest answer in the midwife Ayah: "Let be. Accept."

This is the answer Mrs. Fisher finds also when, at the close of the book, leaving Meigundy for what is the last time, she accepts the care of an orphan boy, Krishman, who, springing up out of the shadows, had followed her for miles along the road into the village.

In all these loosely joined sketches, the place of India is vivid through the author's detail, and one can only be disappointed that the missionary's children choose to come to America and leave their home in Meigudy to the "fingernails of time." But one is not disappointed, unless perhaps he is a tired moviegoer who may feel he has seen all this before, in the butler "wrapped in his long whispering vashti," the gardener "tirelessly pulling the punkah," the "sharp, punctuated thwack-thwack of the dhobi beating clothes," the " 'pik-trtrtr' of a squirrel stealing lizard eggs in the custard-apple grove," and the "rumble of the 12:50 express to Madras as it rushed onto the river bridge."

Humor and Common Sense

HOMESPUN AMERICA. Edited by Wallace Brockway and Bart Keith Winer. Simon & Schuster. $10.

By JOHN COURNOS

AN IMMENSE tome, with over eighty contributors, each with several items, long and short, covering roughly a period of nearly two centuries, through kaleidoscopic changes of backgrounds, manners and ways of life, this volume is not easy to evaluate in a brief review. To be sure, so-called "homespun" aspects of existence are less susceptible to change than those of an urban or sophisticated character, which owe so much to the mutability of technological revolutions and wars and the new philosophies which they engender. Trees and grass do not change, the hills are still there, the meandering rills go on rippling as before; and human nature, in spite of Napoleon, Freud and the Republican party, goes on, almost imperturbably, as of yore.

Death and taxes are also constants of our life; in this instance only the taxes change—for the worse. This is a matter upon which that "homespun" philosopher Will Rogers, with Cherokee blood in him, speaks succinctly: "When taxes first started . . . who started 'em anyhow? Noah must have taken into the Ark two taxes, one male and one female, and did they multiply bountifully. Next to guinea pigs, taxes must have been the most prolific animals." The same Will Rogers, in the aftermath of the first world war, had this to say: "You can't say civilization don't

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advance, however, for in every war they kill you in a new way." Which brings us to Thoreau, who is quoted as saying: "I would not run round a corner to see the world blow up." If he were living today he might not have to run round a corner.

Here, too, we have the great P. T. Barnum advocating, in a manner to put Norman Vincent Peale to shame: "Let Hope Predominate . . . Do Not Scatter Your Powers . . . Whatever You Do, Do With All Your Might. . . ." These spiritual maxims, however, are not all. There are his words on "The Art of Money Getting." The thing to remember is that "there is nothing animate or inanimate that will work so faithfully as money when placed at interest, well secured. It works night and day, and in wet or dry weather."

Also represented is that most humble and charitable of men, and at the same time the most "homespun," Abe Lincoln: "I was not very accustomed to flattery, and it came the sweeter to me. I was rather like the Hoosier with the ginger bread, when he said he reckoned he loved it better than any other man, and got less of it." And in "The Laughing Lincoln" (an excerpt from Carl Sandburg's biography) we are provided with that humor that has endeared our greatest President to his people. If humor and common sense, which are allied, are not the supreme virtue of homespun America, what is? The book teems with examples of this dual faculty. Mr. Dooley (Finley Peter Dunne) is full of it, and some of the best examples are offered here. His words on "Progress" have all the validity of what has been said with great erudition and the use of a sophisticated terminology: "It's like a merry-go-round. . . . We think we're thravellin' like th' divvle but th' man that doesn't care about merry-go-rounds knows that we will come back where we were. . . ." This is what Nietzsche referred to in the more elegant phrase of "eternal recurrence."

When Mr. Hennessy, to turn the subject, asked Mr. Dooley: "What d'ye think iv the man down in Pinnsylvanya who says th' Lord an' him is partners in a coal mine?" the response from Mr. Dooley came promptly: "Has he divided th' profits?" Who will say the answer is not a sage one, and one very much to the point?

What a host of common-sense humorists America has produced! Many of them are forgotten, or no longer read. Apart from those already mentioned, the names of Mark Twain, Artemus Ward (who amused Lincoln), Bill Arp, the American Joe Miller, Josh Billings, Joel Chandler Harris, Bill Nye, Eugene Field, William Allen White, George Ade, Ring Lardner, all here represented at their most characteristic best, read like a litany of sensible laughter.

There are many solemn contributions, too, including a spate of fine poems by Robert Frost. Some of the entries seem out of place in this excellent volume, and it could have stood a little judicious pruning. But we can't have everything in this life. And that is a "homespun" maxim, too.

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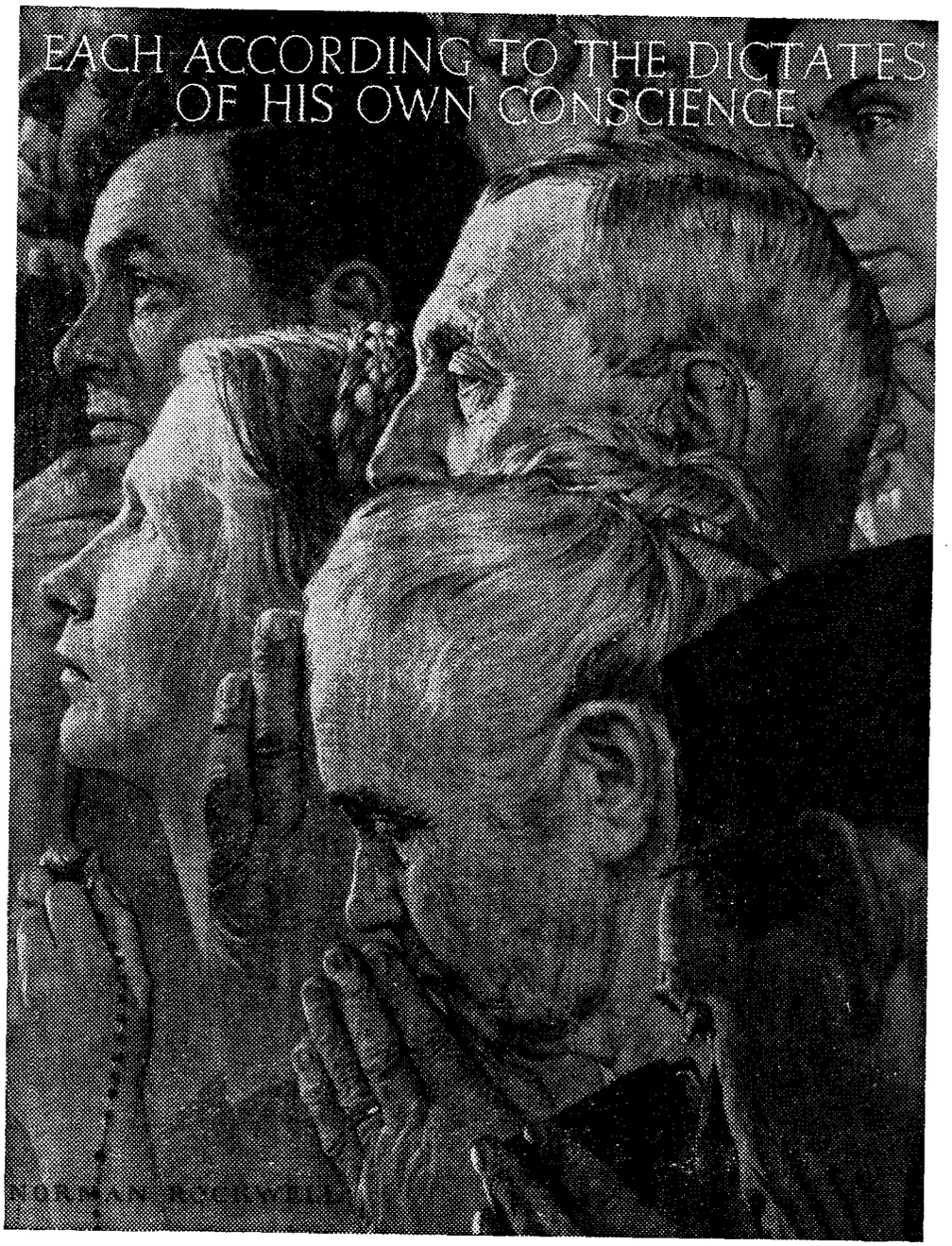

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